

May 2004

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## ABL people honored at Washington ceremony

*by J. Rich Garcia, Directed Energy Directorate*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Col. Ellen Pawlikowski, director of the Airborne Laser (ABL) System Program Office at Kirtland Air Force Base was named the winner of the coveted Leadership Award at a Missile Defense Agency ceremony held March 18. The ceremony was held in conjunction with the organization's annual ballistic missile defense conference.

The award is presented to the individual deemed to have made the most significant leadership contributions to further the agency's mission of providing a viable defense against missile threats to the United States, its allies, and deployed forces.

Colonel Pawlikowski, who was recently selected for promotion to brigadier general, was praised for her "dynamic and visionary leadership that has raised the standard for program managers across the Department of Defense."

ABL also won two other awards: Bonnie Williams of the organization's Information Technology Division was honored for her contributions in support of the effort to develop and sustain the ballistic missile defense system; and the ABL Beam Control/Fire Control Integrated Product Team was chosen the winner of the technology award for their efforts in science, technology, engineering and testing.

ABL, which became part of the Missile Defense Agency's multi-service program in 2001, is building the world's first laser-armed combat aircraft – a converted 747-400 freighter aircraft equipped with a megawatt-class Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser developed at Kirtland in 1977.

Testing on that laser is currently underway at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., where the ABL aircraft will also be fitted with the sophisticated optical system needed to target a boosting ballistic missile from hundreds of kilometers away. @